

Message Text

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TO AMEMBASSY KUWAIT IMMEDIATE

S E C R E T STATE 231070

EXDIS

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR, MARR, US, IS

SUBJECT: KUWAIT CONCERN OVER PERSHING MISSILES FOR ISRAEL

REF: KUWAIT 3910

FOR THE AMBASSADOR ONLY

1. YOU SHOULD REVIEW WITH ACTING FOREIGN MINISTER SHAIKH SALIM AT NEXT SUITABLE OPPORTUNITY RECORD OF WHAT WE HAVE SAID ABOUT PERSHINGS FOR ISRAEL. YOU SHOULD INFORM HIM THAT RECENT OUTBURST OF PUBLICITY ABOUT PERSHINGS IS TOTALLY MISLEADING AND BEARS NO RELATION TO THE FACTS. THE FACTS ARE THAT THE ISRAELIS FIRST APPROACHED US ABOUT THE PERSHINGS IN AUGUST 1974 AS PART OF A LIST OF MILITARY ITEMS THEY WANTED FROM US FOR ISRAEL'S LONG TERM MODERNIZATION PROGRAM. WE HAVE NOT RPT NOT MADE ANY DECISION TO PROVIDE ISRAEL WITH PERSHINGS. WE HAVE SIMPLY AGREED TO STUDY THE REQUEST.

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2. YOU SHOULD POINT OUT THAT THE SECRETARY HAS MADE THIS CLEAR PUBLICLY ON SEVERAL OCCASIONS. ON SEPTEMBER 20, FOLLOWING HIS MEETING WITH ISRAELI DEFENSE MINISTER PERES, THE SECRETARY SAID QUOTE:THE STUDIES THAT ARE GOING ON BETWEEN ISRAEL AND THE U.S. CONCERN THE BASIC ISRAELI LIST THAT WAS SUBMITTED IN AUGUST 1974, AND THEY SHOULD BE CONSIDERED AS PART OF A CONTINUING RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN ISRAEL AND THE U.S. AND NOT RPT NOT GEARED TO ANY PARTICULAR NEGOTIATION. UNQUOTE. IN RESPONSE TO A QUESTION WHETHER THIS MEANT NO DECISION HAD BEEN REACHED ON PERSHING, THE SECRETARY REPLIED QUOTE: THAT IS CORRECT. UNQUOTE.

3. THE SECRETARY MADE THE SAME POINT IN A TV INTERVIEW ON SEPTEMBER 22 IN WHICH HE SAID INTER ALIA QUOTE: IT HAS BEEN BEFORE THE U.S. SINCE LAST AUGUST. THERE IS ABSOLUTELY NOTHING NEW ABOUT IT. THE U.S. HAS NOT AGREED TO SUPPLY IT. IT HAS AGREED AGAIN, AFTER THE REASSESSMENT, TO CONTINUE THE STUDY THAT WAS ALREADY GOING ON. THERE HAS BEEN NO COMMITMENT. THE PRESIDENT HAS SAID IT. I HAVE SAID IT. SECRETARY SCHLESINGER HAS SAID IT, AND WE HAVE ENOUGH REAL PROBLEMS NOT TO TORMENT OURSELVES WITH ARTIFICIAL ONES. . . THE PURPOSE OF THE STUDY IS TO SORT OUT SOME OF THE QUESTIONS THAT ARE NOW BEING ASKED -- WHETHER IT IS NECESSARY FOR THE DEFENSE OF ISRAEL, WHAT THE STRATEGIC IMPLICATIONS WOULD BE --AND NO DECISIONS HAVE BEEN MADE OF ANY KIND. UNQUOTE. IN THE SAME INTERVIEW, THE SECRETARY POINTED OUT THAT MANY OF THE ITEMS ON THE ISRAELI LIST, INCLUDING THE PERSHING WOULD, IF APPROVED, HAVE DELIVERY DATES IN THE 1980S BUT THAT WE EXPECTED A NUMBER OF POLITICAL DEVELOPMENTS WOULD OCCUR IN THE MEANTIME. THEREFORE, OUR WILLINGNESS TO STUDY ISRAEL'S REQUESTS MUST BE SEEN IN CONTEXT OF A SUPPLY ARRANGEMENT THAT HAS BEEN GOING ON FOR SOME TIME AND NOT AS A DRAMATIC DECISION THAT SUDDENLY ESCALATES THE LEVEL OF ARMAMENTS.

4. YOU MAY ALSO INFORM SHAIKH SALIM THAT WE DO NOT ENVISAGE TAKING ANY PERSHING OUT OF OUR FORCES' INVENTORIES TO SUPPLY ISRAEL, THAT THE PERSHING PRODUCTION LINE IS
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CLOSED, THAT A NEW MODEL OF THE PERSHING IS NOT SCHEDULED TO BE TESTED UNTIL 1978, WITH PRODUCTION NOT COMMENCING UNTIL 1980, AND THAT WE HAVE MADE CATEGORICALLY CLEAR THAT THE ONLY THING WE HAVE AGREED TO STUDY IS THE POSSIBILITY OF PROVIDING ISRAEL AT SOME POINT WITH THE PERSHING ARMED WITH CONVENTIONAL WARHEADS ONLY. INGERSOLL

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